



USAID | PHILIPPINES

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Office of Program Resources Management

(632) 552-9907

February 5, 2006

“USAID/Philippines does not vouch for the accuracy or the opinions of the articles provided in this press clipping service and assume no responsibility for their content. Please contact USAID/Philippines at infoph@usaid.gov if you have any questions about USAID programs and projects.”

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #12 (SO12)

(Conflict Reduced in Mindanao and Other Areas Vulnerable to Violence)

Cotabato City: Ready for takeoff

(Source: Philippine Star, 2/5/06, page 16)



was poised to become one of Mindanao's premier trading centers because of its strategic location and rich natural resources. This potential remained unrealized when armed conflict erupted there in the 1970s.

"It's about time local business people take the lead and become the city's ambassadors of goodwill," said Marquez, who is also the president of the Metro Cotabato Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI).

The MCCCI, which receives financial and technical assistance from the US-

AID-funded Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) program, is at the forefront of initiatives to create a better business climate in the city.

He said Cotabato businessmen should promote the city as a viable business destination during their business trips to help the local government attract new investments in the city.

Development planners are also preparing for increased business activity in the city. According to Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)-Cotabato City officer-in-charge Danilo Buenbrazo, the

agency's small and medium-scale enterprise (SME) development plan focuses on improving the business incentive code and the business licensing process. It also seeks to promote competitiveness by introducing new business systems such as franchising, as well as strengthen business organizations.

"The plan also seeks to improve on existing business policies by providing by providing incentives for information and communication technology (ICT)-related and big-ticket investments," Buenbrazo adds.